



DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND LITERATURE.

VOLUME XXIII. No. 15.

MONTRÉAL & NEW YORK, JULY 27, 1888.

30 CTS. per An. Post-Paid.

**SOMETHING ABOUT THE AINOS.**

We gather from Miss Isabella Bird's "Unbeaten Tracks in Japan" the following about the Ainos, who are the aborigines of Yezo, and not improbably of the whole of Japan. They are peaceable savages, who live on the coast and in the interior by fishing and hunting, and stand in about the same relation to their Japanese subjugators as the North American Indians to the people of the United States, receiving, however, better treatment than is usually accorded to subject races. A rough census of them made in 1873 gave their number as 12,281, almost exactly divided between the sexes. It is believed that their number is decreasing.

Prof. A. S. Bickmore, of the American Museum of Natural History, has called attention to the fact that the Ainos do not belong to the Mongol race, but to our own Indo-European or Caucasian family, and that they are more nearly allied to us than the Aryans of India.

The "hairy Ainos," as they have been called, are stupid, gentle, good-natured, and submissive, and are a wholly distinct race from the Japanese. In complexion they resemble the peoples of Spain and Southern Italy, and the expression of the face and the manner of showing courtesy are European rather than Asiatic. If not taller, they are of a much broader and heavier make than the Japanese; the hair is jet black, very soft, and on the scalp forms thick, pendent masses, occasionally wavy, but never showing any tendency to curl. The beard, moustache, and eyebrows are thick and full and there is frequently a heavy growth of stiff hair on the chest and limbs. The neck is short, the brow high, broad, and massive, the nose broad and inclined to flatness, the mouth wide but well formed, the line of the eyes and eyebrows perfectly straight. Their language is a very simple one. They have no written characters, no literature, no history, very

few traditions, and they have left no impression upon the land from which they have been driven.

On visiting some Aino villages situated among small patches of millet, tobacco, and pumpkins, so choked with weeds that it was doubtful whether they were crops, Miss Bird was much surprised with the extreme neatness and cleanliness outside the houses. They were model villages in this respect, with no litter lying in sight anywhere. Miss Bird describes at length the "eager hospitality" she received in the house of one of the Aino chiefs. The account is interesting and raises our estimation

of these people. The children of these people are very gentle and are made more of by their parents than the children of the Japanese. Hunting and fishing are the occupations of the men, their indoor recreation being the carving of tobacco-boxes, knife-sheaths, sake-sticks, etc. The women never seem to have an idle moment. They rise early and sew, weave, split bark, and do all the hard work, though the men do help sometimes in relieving them of the care of the children. But the life of all of them is not raised much above the necessities of animal existence; it is barren, dull and dark. "They have no

history," says Miss Bird, "their traditions are scarcely worthy of the name, they claim descent from a dog, they are sunk in grossest ignorance, they worship the bear, the sun, moon, fire, water, and other things besides." Their clothing in winter consists of one, two, or more coats of skins, with hoods of the same. In summer it consists of loose coats made of cloth woven from the split bark of a forest tree, a durable and beautiful fabric.

The religious notions of the Ainos are described as being extremely vague and destitute of cohesion. With the exception of a few hill-shrines they have no temples,

and they have neither priests, sacrifices, nor worship. There are traces of some primitive form of nature worship. The outward symbols of their gods are wands and posts of peeled wood, whittled nearly to the top, from which the pendent shavings fall down in white curls. The traveller who formulates an Aino creed, says Miss Bird, "must evolve it from his inner consciousness." The whole sum of their religious notions seems to be a few vague fears and hopes, and a suspicion that there are things outside themselves, more powerful than themselves, whose good influences may be obtained or whose evil influences may be averted by libations of sake. They seem to have no definite ideas concerning a future state, and the subject is not a pleasing one to them.

It is pleasant to know that about a year ago Rev. C. H. Carpenter, after a number of years' experience as a missionary in Burmah, where his health suffered, went, recuperated by five years' rest in this country, to labor among these people. Of his work among them we have as yet no knowledge.—*Christian at Work.*



AINOS, ABORIGINES OF JAPAN.

OPEN BIOGRAPHICAL volumes where you will, and the man who has no faith in religion has faith in a night-mare.—*Bulwer.*